

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 3116

LIMDIS

BUENOS AIRES FOR ASST SECRETARY TODMAN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, UY
SUBJ: COURTESY CALL ON CINCS

1. SUMMARY. DURING A COURTESY CALL ON THE THREE CINCS, WE
HAD A BROAD-RANGING DISCUSSION OF US-GOU RELATIONS AND HUMAN
RIGHTS. THEY BEGAN DEFENSIVELY AND ACCUSATORY AND HOPEFULLY
CAME AWAY SOMEWHAT MOVED TO ACCEPT THAT THE ONUS FOR THE CURRENT
AND FUTURE REPUTATION OF URUGUAY RESTS ON THEIR SHOULDERS.
END SUMMARY.

2. ACCOMPANIED BY DATT, I MADE A COURTESY CALL ON THE
CINCS THIS MORNING (AUGUST 12). ALL THREE WERE THERE: GENERAL
VADORA--ARMY, GENERAL PALADINI--AIR FORCE, ADMIRAL MARQUEZ--
NAVY. ADMIRAL SANGURGO, CHIEF OF THE JOINT STAFF, ALSO SAT IN.

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3. AFTER OPENING COURTESIES, VADORA TOOK THE LEAD WITH A
RECATATION OF THE GOU COMPLAINTS. HE BEGAN BY RECOUNTING THE
NATIONAL EMERGENCY BROUGHT ON BY THE FAILURE OF THE
TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP IN BOTH THE
POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC AREAS HEIGHTENED FURTHER BY THE
TUPAMARO THREAT. HE COMPLAINED THAT THE ARMED FORCES HAD BEEN
VILLIFIED FOR WHAT IN THEIR MINDS WAS A PATRIOTIC

DEFENSE OF THEIR COUNTRY. HE SAW AN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST CONSPIRACY RESPONSIBLE FOR CREATING URUGUAY'S BLACKENED INTERNATIONAL IMAGE. HE EVEN MADE THE CHARGE AT ONE POINT THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD FAILED TO PROVIDE SMALL ARMS AMMUNITION DURING A PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT PERIOD IN 1972 DURING THE ANTI TUPAMARO CAMPAIGN. (EMBASSY RECORDS DO NOT SUPPORT HIS CHARGE, THOUGH THERE MAY HAVE BEEN SOME DIFFICULTIES IN PROVIDING AMMUNITION UNDER MIMEX. WE DID MAKE COMMERCIAL SALES.)

3. PALADINI AND MARQUEZ WERE LESS VERBAL, ALTHOUGH MARQUEZ CHIMED IN FROM TIME TO TIME TO ADD EMPHASIS TO VADORA. MARQUEZ, UNLIKE THE OTHER TWO, DENIED THAT ANY ABUSES HAD BEEN COMMITTED BY THE URUGUAYAN MILITARY. PALADINI AND VADORA ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SOME HAD OCCURRED BUT CONTENDED THAT THE MILITARY HAD RELIGIOUSLY FOLLOWED THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK ESTABLISHED BY THE POLITICAL PARTIES. VADORA WAS SHARPLY CRITICAL OF WHAT HE TERMED THE "MORALISM" OF THE US POLICY AND INDICATED THAT ITS THRUST WAS UNFAIRLY HEAVY ON COUNTRIES SUCH AS URUGUAY AND LESS SEVERE ON EVEN WORSE VIOLATORS. MARQUEZ AT THIS POINT OBSERVED THAT IT WAS IRONIC THAT ARGENTINA, WHICH WAS KILLING OFF ITS INSURGENTS, WAS BEING CRITICIZED LESS THAN URUGUAY. "WE WENT THROUGH THE LEGAL MECHANISM AND PUT OUR INSURGENTS IN JAIL", HE COMPLAINED. THEY ALL AGREED THAT URUGUAY HAD BEEN JUDGED WITHOUT HAVING BEEN GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE ITS OWN DEFENSE.

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4. I THANKED THEM FOR THEIR CANDOR AND OFFERED TO SPEAK EQUALLY CANDIDLY. I SAID I WAS HOPEFUL THAT THIS MEETING WOULD BE FOLLOWED BY MANY OTHER BECAUSE THEY HAD THE POWER AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAKING POLICY FOR THE GOU. I THEN OBSERVED THAT THE GREATEST RESPONSIBILITY THEY HAD WAS TO BE RESPONSIVE TO THOSE WHO MADE INQUIRIES REGARDING DISAPPEARANCES AND IMPRISONMENTS AND THAT THEIR IMAGE WOULD ONLY BE IMPROVED IF THEY TOOK THE ACTIONS NECESSARY TO PROVE TO THE WORLD THAT INDEED THEY WERE NOT AN OPPPRESSIVE GOVERNMENT. THEY BRISTLED AT THIS SUGGESTION, RETORTING DEFENSIVELY AT FIRST THAT THEY DID NOT FEEL THE NEED TO EXPLAIN THEMSELVES TO THE WORLD ESPECIALLY WHEN THE ATTACKS AGAINST THEM WERE MADE BY KNOWN COMMUNISTS OR OTHERS, SUCH AS WILSON FERREIRA ALDUNATE, WHO TOLD NOTHING BUT A "PACK OF LIES." I OBSERVED SIMPLY THAT THEY HAD THE ALTERNATIVE OF REMAINING SILENT AND UNCHANGED AND RETAINING THEIR CURRENT NEGATIVE INTERNATIONAL IMAGE OR OF TAKING POSITIVE ACTIONS TO PROVE TO THE WORLD OTHERWISE. I ALSO OBSERVED THAT AS LONG AS THEY CONTINUED THEIR MIND SET THAT THEY WERE THE INJURED PARTY AND THAT DARK FORCES IN THE WORLD WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR DILEMMA, CONDITIONS WOULD NEVER IMPROVE. I THEN SAID QUITE BLUNTLY, "YOU MUST ADMIT THAT ABUSES HAVE BEEN COMMITTED?" VADORA AND PALADINI NODDED THAT THEY HAD.

ONLY MARQUEZ DENIED VIOLATIONS.

5. PALADINI WAS THE FIRST TO ACCEPT THAT THEY HAD TO TAKE SOME ACTIONS TO IMPROVE THEIR INTERNATIONAL IMAGE. AS THE CONVERSATION WENT ON VADORA AND MARQUEZ FELL INTO LINE AS WELL, WITH VADORA FINALLY ASKING WHAT STEPS COULD BE TAKEN. I WELCOMED HIS QUESTION AND OFFERED TO MEET WITH THEM AGAIN SOON TO DISCUSS A NUMBER OF THINGS THAT COULD BE DONE. I EMPHASIZED THAT THE PROCESS HAD TO BE CONSISTENT AND THOROUGH AND REQUIRED AS A STARTER THAT THEY ORGANIZED THEMSELVES TO RESPOND TO ALL REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION REGARDING PRISONERS AND SUSPECTED PRISONERS. DESPITE MARQUEZ'S PROTESTATIONS THAT THIS WAS IMPOSSIBLE, PALADINI AND VADORA APPEARED TO AGREE. I ALSO SUGGESTED THAT AT SOME POINT THEY HAD TO INVITE AN
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INTERNATIONALLY RESPECTED AND RECOGNIZED GROUP SUCH AS THE IAHRC TO MAKE AN INDEPENDENT SURVEY AND STUDY. THEY BRISTLED AND CHARACTERIZED THE IAHRC AS "POLITICIZED AND PREJUDICED." I COUNTERED THAT THEY HAD CREATED THEIR OWN CONSPIRACY THEORY, ULTIMATELY, THEY HAD TO ACCEPT THE FACT THAT ANY INTERNATIONALLY RESPECTED GROUP WOULD NOT COMPORT COMPLETELY WITH THEIR VIEWS. BUT TO REFUSE A VISIT BY THE IAHRC, WHICH WE SUPPORTED AND WHICH WAS RESPECTED THROUGHOUT LATIN AMERICA, WAS TANTAMOUNT TO CLOSING THEMSELVES OUT FROM ANY INTERNATIONAL CONSIDERATION AND SYMPATHY. I SUGGESTED THEY FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF PARAGUAY WHICH HAD RECENTLY SENT ITS FOREIGN MINISTER UP TO CARACAS TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF AN IAHRC VISIT WITH THE CHAIRMAN OF THAT COMMISSION. THEY LISTENED BUT MADE NO COMMENT.

6. AS THE TWO-HOUR LONG CONVERSATION WORE ON, THE STRIDENCY OF THEIR ATTACKS ON THE UNITED STATES AND ON THE COMMUNIST CONSPIRACY FELL AWAY SOMEWHAT AND THEY BEGAN TO SEE SOME VIRTUE IN WORKING THEMSELVES OUT OF THEIR CURRENT DEADEND. VADORA, WHO RETIRES TOWARD THE END OF THE YEAR, WHILE THE MOST VUCIFEROUS IN THE BEGINNING APPEARED TO COME AROUND THE MOST. PALADINI, ALSO TO RETIRE WITHIN SIX MONTHS, WAS THE FIRST TO SEE MERIT IN CAMPAIGN TO IMPROVE THEIR IMAGE. MARQUEZ AND SANGURGO WERE THE LIGHT-WEIGHTS IN THE CONVERSATION.

7. THIS WAS THE FIRST OF WHAT I HOPE WILL BECOME A REGULAR ROUND OF MEETINGS WITH THE CINCS. AND OTHER MAJOR COMMANDERS. THEY WIELD THE POWER AND ARE THE ONES THAT HAVE TO BE CONVINCED IF WE ARE TO SEE A CHANGE HERE. MY GOAL IS TO SHIFT THEIR THINKING AWAY FROM THEIR CURRENT POSTURE OF FEELING HURT AND MISUNDERSTOOD TOWARD ONE OF RECOGNIZING THAT THE ONUS IS ON THEIR SHOULDERS TO PROVE TO THEIR FELLOW URUGUAYANS, TO THE WORLD, AND TO US THAT THE GOU IS DETERMINED TO START ON THE ROAD BACK. CURRENTLY THEY ARE LITERALLY WALLOWING IN SELFPIITY
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AND HAVE CONVINCED THEMSELVES THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS TURNED
ITS BACK ON AN ANTI-COMMUNIST ALLY. THEY APPEARED TODAY TO BE
INTERESTED IN TAKING SOME POSITIVE STEPS. WE MUST KEEP
THIS INTEREST ALIVE AND FED.
PEZZULLO

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